

CLAIMS

We claim:

Sub C1

1. A release control method for providing early deployment releases of a software system, the early deployment releases containing support for new features and platforms, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. providing a branch of a software source code file designated for incorporation of support for new features and platforms hereinafter called an ED branch;
- b. committing pre-tested source code for new features and platforms into the ED branch; and
- c. using the ED branch, generating a new early development release containing pre-tested source code for new features and platforms.

2. The release control method of claim 1 comprising the additional step of repeating steps b and c on a regular recurring basis for a fixed number of cycles.

3. The release control method of claim 1 wherein the committing step comprises committing pre-tested source code for new features and platforms from a pre-integration branch into the ED branch.

4. The release control method of claim 2 wherein the regular recurring basis is approximately every 8 weeks.

5. The release control method of claim 2 wherein the fixed number of cycles is 5 or more.

6. The release control method of claim 2 wherein repeated releases created by repeating steps b and c on a regular recurring basis for a fixed number of cycles comprise steps of generating a fat release followed by a thin release alternating in such fashion throughout the fixed number of cycles.

7. The release control method of claim 6 wherein alternating releases are releases of new versions of an internetworking operating system (IOS).

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543 C.2

8. A system for providing early deployment releases of a software system, the early deployment releases containing support for new features and platforms, comprising:

- a. a branch of a software source code file designated for incorporation of support for new features and platforms hereinafter called an ED branch;
- b. logic for committing pre-tested source code for new features and platforms into the ED branch;
- c. using the ED branch, logic for generating a new early development release containing pre-tested source code for new features and platforms; and
- d. logic for generating said new early development release containing pre-tested source code for new features and platform on a regular recurring basis for a fixed number of cycles.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein the logic for committing comprises logic for committing pre-tested source code for new features and platforms from a pre-integration branch into the ED branch.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein the regular recurring basis is as approximately every 8 weeks.

11. The system of claim 8 wherein the fixed number of cycles is 5 or more.

12. The system of claim 8 wherein the logic for generating said new early development release containing pre-tested source code for new features and platform on a regular recurring basis for a fixed number of cycles comprises logic for generating a fat release followed by a thin release alternating in such fashion throughout the fixed number of cycles.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein alternating releases are releases of new versions of an internetworking operating system (IOS).

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14. A product release method for controlling the release of a software system code base on a fixed frequency, the method comprising the steps of:

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Sub C3

a. selecting one or more features for inclusion in a new release of the software system code base, wherein a quantity of features selected will allow a next scheduled release of the software system code base to be completed at a required time;

5 b. committing the quantity of features selected into a pre-integration branch of the software system code base; and

c. testing the quantity of features selected in the pre-integration branch so as to commit the quantity of features selected into a development branch in time to allow the next scheduled release of the software system code base to be completed at the required time.

10 15. The method of claim 14 comprising the additional steps of:

d. completing testing of a modified software system code base in the development branch which contains the quantity of features selected and tested in the pre-integration branch; and

15 e. releasing the modified software system code base at the required time.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein steps a through e are repeated on a regular recurring basis for a fixed number of cycles.

20 17. The method of claim 16 wherein repeated releases created by repeating steps a through e on a regular recurring basis for a fixed number of cycles comprise steps of generating a fat release followed by a thin release alternating in such fashion throughout the fixed number of cycles.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the regular recurring basis is approximately every 8 weeks.

ADD C4

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